

/56 cont. /

846 121. On top of these and other theories, the Pemón Indians,
829 who practice the couvade, themselves have explained to me
the reason and extent. Therefore, as far as they are concerned,
there is no doubt that the reason for this is the following. They
say that: /five plates appear here/ /57/ a) "every alteration
of the health of the father or of the mother, any work which
might lead to tiredness, any fatigue or disturbance of the pro-
genitors, etc., has repercussions on the newborn, who are a
part of them." They believe, thus, in sympathetic influence,
to which they suppose children to be extremely sensitive and
which has repercussions on the child, as a part of a whole,
from the parents.

143 Men as scientific as Alexis Carrel believe that there is
some truth in this and thus there is an explanation of certain
phenomena of telepathy, prescience, etc.

846 b) The Pemón add to this another reason and this is that,
776 according to them, the potorí or piá, each of them the en-
genderer of a definite species of animal and plant, on being
cut down or destroyed, take vengeance on human sprouts or
offspring. Another thing is that the mauarí and other spirits
are bothered by certain actions of men, such as, for example,
by the rolling of stones down hills, and then they also take
vengeance on their little children, who are easier prey for
their anger and their evil influences. This second cause is,
thus, belief in the harmful influence of invisible spirits and of
the progenitors and, for this reason, defenders of living beings,
whoever they may be /sic/.

843 It will suffice to transcribe a few precautions, among the
● 784 very many taken down from their dictation, so that the two
principles which have been stated may be quite clear:

1. A woman who is enceinte must not eat cassava which
has been returned to the house from which it came, so
that, when she gives birth the child may not turn back
to the breast.

/57 cont. /

- 784 2. Pubescent girls must not eat twin fruits, so that they
845 may not conceive twins.
- 846 3. The parents of a newborn child must not eat pauj
784 meat, because it will make the child turn yellow. Let it
be remembered that the pauj has a yellow face, very
striking in contrast to the extreme blackness of its frizzled
crest.
4. The parents of a newborn child must not walk barefoot
over rocky or hot sandy places, lest the child should suffer.
5. They must not carry heavy loads either, because the
child's neck will become bent and he will suffer from
fatigue.
6. They must abstain from sexual relations, since these
will produce fever and vomiting in the children.
7. If the father of the newborn should noisily knock down
large rocks from high hills, the child will suffer from
fright and horrors and will tremble during its sleep.
8. If the father of the newborn cuts certain vines, /58/
his child's navel will become infected or will swell up,
depending on whether those vines rot or swell up.

789 The Pemón are not, at the present time, exaggerated in
846 the practice of these observances; they observe them for only
a few days and this because of the preachings of their fathers-
in-law and mothers-in-law. Then, since they know the charms
for each case and each thing to counteract evil influences,
they return to ordinary life.

765 122. Another custom, the twin of the couvade and based
753 on the same principle of sympathy or sympathetic influence,
is the asarakpué, or observances which must be followed by the
relatives of the dead. This is not only observing mourning or
showing sadness; they consider themselves infected by the
rotting of the corpse of the dead relative and as foci of infection
for all they touch.

/60 cont. /

- 881 b) they must paint the face and the whole body with
[302] annatto in order to cover up the yellowness and not be-
come prey to amariuak;
- 881 c) they must not raise their eyes nor look toward the hills,
where they think the mauari live;
- 784 d) they must not bathe nor go for water, in order not to
be perhaps possessed by rató;
- [292] e) they must use moriche sandals whenever, out of
necessity, they must put their feet on the ground;
- f) they must abstain, as has been said above, from certain
foodstuffs.

881 128. There are two somewhat more curious things while
the indisposition lasts, and they are: absolute silence, to which
they are constrained, and whipping, which they are given each
time they come in or go out of the rancho for some necessity.

881 The Indians insist on saying that the speech of a menstruat-
841 ing Indian woman is extremely pernicious; for that reason no
521 one speaks to them; and when the days have passed and she
wishes to return to daily conversation, the woman must address
a stick and say to it: "Are you here?" Then the tree will dry
up and the same thing will happen to any Indian man to whom
she addresses herself. /61/ "This," Ernesto writes, "seems
not to be true, but it certainly is their custom."

881 The whipping is not in any way at all a flagellation nor
anything like it; it is only a ceremony, which is done by the
old woman who is caring for the girl every time the latter goes
out of the rancho, so that the evil spirits may consider her to
be something scornful. One day after the indisposition has
passed, at dawn when the cocks crow, they bring her down from
the hammock, seat her on a little bench, and the oldest man
or the master of the house flails her with some strings made of
[593] moriche fiber and recites over her a certain charm. "By means
of this whipping," adds Ernesto, "when the women get angry
with their daughters for being hard to manage, they customarily

123 While we were camped near Uruyén as many as forty Indian visitors
 574 were sometimes present at Uruyén at one time and every structure there was
 573 crowded with hammocks, including the wall-less B, although Kamarakotos
 784 dislike sleeping without walls, but even under this pressure no one occupied F
 or G or used them for any purpose.

Food

262 The Kamarakotos will eat practically everything available in their region
 433 from which humans can extract any nourishment, but their main reliance is on
 241 agriculture. Wild food, plant and animal, plays a valued part in their diet
 but its failure is not fatal. Cultivated plants are the staple foods, and their
 failure means starvation. Contrary to the general impression, it is extremely
 difficult and precarious to live off the country in the tropical jungles and
 sabanas. The Kamarakotos must be classed as agricultural Indians.

Plant Foods and Farming.

222 Wild plant food is relatively unimportant and forms only an insignificant
 262 addition to the Kamarakoto diet. At least four non-poisonous mushrooms are
 known and eaten. I did not hear of any wild roots or seeds that are commonly
 eaten. There are a few, surprisingly few, wild fruits that are enjoyed in season,
 including the fruits of the maripa and moriche palms, called aba and kwai
 respectively, and several sorts of guamos, pods with a sweetish edible pulp sur-
 rounding the hard seeds (warwoto, maipa, abira), and the algarrobo (wadé)
 with somewhat similar pods with a powdery edible substance around the seeds.
 These with a fruit called made that I did not identify are almost all the wild
 plants that provide food.

244 Cultivated food plants, on the other hand, are numerous and varied.
 Some plants, food and otherwise, are generally planted more or less at random
 around the houses, notably gourds, cotton, and pupu (a shrub with spiny leaves
 and a fleshy fruit that looks like a golden-yellow tomato). Agriculture, proper-
 ly speaking, is carried out by a system of mixed, temporary farm-patches, a
 wasteful and inefficient type of farming that has been taken over from the
 Indians and is common throughout Venezuela where such patches are called
 "conucos."

241 The Kamarakoto conuco, uma, is invariably located in the forest, but
 311 usually near its edge. The reason for this is that the forest has become estab-
 134 lished wherever there is rich soil leaving only the poor, sandy soil open and
 242 grass-covered. At Uruyén the to-esa, Reyes, in an unusual experimental
 mood, cleared a patch of sabana and planted casave¹⁰⁷ on it, but when we left
 107 [see footnote on p 319, Category 116 - Analyst]